

Amendments to the Specification:

The paragraph on page 12, line 3 has been amended as follows:

--Figs. 2a-2e show another embodiment of the apparatus of the invention similar to the embodiment shown in Fig. 1. A primary difference between the apparatus 50 shown in Fig 2a and the apparatus 30 shown in Fig. 1 is that apparatus 50 comprises an appliance 54 comprising a relatively wider, outer peripheral portion 56, or flattened band, rather than struts 36 in order to contact a greater area of tissue for better tissue coverage, or greater hoop strength or opening pressure. The outer peripheral portion 56 defines an open interior space 58. Fig. 2b shows a front view of the appliance 54 and Fig. 2c shows a top view of the appliance 54 when placed in the body region. As shown in Fig. 2b, the open interior space 58 defined by the outer peripheral portion 56 remains open when placed in the body region. As shown, the peripheral portion 56 may have relatively wide side portions 62 and relatively narrow end portions 64.--